



June 13, 2019

Founders Room at the Frederick Douglass – Isaac Myers Maritime Park
Living Classrooms, 1417 Thames Street, Baltimore

12:00pm – 2:00pm

Minutes

Commissioners in attendance:

Anirban Basu	MEDC Chair, Sage Policy Group
Howard Blackwell “Blackie” Bowen	Ewing Oil Company, Inc.
Scott Burger	Lolli & Pops (call in) (corrected 3/9/20)
Ed Coleman	Ciox Health
Annemarie Dickerson	Francis Scott Key Family Resort
Kai Hirabayshi	Caterpillar, Inc.
Manish Kothari	Sheladia Associates, Inc.
Julie Lenzer	UM Ventures
Aris Melissaratos	Former Secretary, Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development
Mike Miller	OGOS, Energy, LLC
Laura Neuman	Entrepreneur
Elizabeth Rendón-Sherman	LG-TEK (call in)
Robert Wallace	BITHGROUP Technologies (call in)
J. Blacklock Wills	The Wills Group
Margaret Wood	Wood Consulting

Ex-Officio Members:

Acting Secretary James Rzepkowski	Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR)
Secretary Kelly Schulz	Department of Commerce
Robert Brennan	Maryland Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO)

Guests:

Chris Rowsom	Living Classrooms
Meredith Wimbrow	Office of the Governor
Josh Kurtz	Maryland Matters
Sally Guy	Johns Hopkins University
Elizabeth Allison	Department of Legislative Services
Adam Greeney	DLLR

Commerce Staff:

Ben Wu	Deputy Secretary/Chief Operating Officer (COO)
Julie Woepke	MEDC Executive Director

Tom Riford	Assistant Secretary
Kyle McColgan	Special Assistant
Liz Fitzsimmons	Managing Director, Tourism, Film & the Arts
Jayson Knott	Senior Director, Business and Industry Sector Development
Rhonda Ray	Managing Director, Policy, Research and Government Affairs
Jessica Reynolds	Acting Director, International Investment and Trade
Nancy McCrea	Director of Research
Dan Leaderman	Senior Communications Manager
Andrea Salizzoni	Executive Associate
Jack Davis	Intern

I. Call to Order

Chairman Basu called the meeting to order, welcomed attendees and guests. He thanked Chris Rowsom and Living Classrooms for hosting the meeting.

II. Welcome

Chris Rowsom, Vice President, Living Classrooms, provided an overview of the facility and explained the mission of Living Classrooms is to strengthen communities and inspire young people to achieve their potential through hands-on education and job training, using urban, natural, and maritime resources as "living classrooms." Mr. Rowsom cited the Living Classrooms Foundation promotes economic longevity and described several of the Foundation's properties and programs located in Baltimore City.

III. Chairman's Updates

Chairman Basu briefed the Commissioners on the State's economic performance. He commented that while the State's performance is overall adequate, the momentum has not picked up since the Federal shutdown earlier this year. He stated the State remains 42nd nationally in job growth.

IV. Review and Acceptance of the March 15, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the March 15, 2019 meeting were approved.

V. Commerce Secretary Update

Commerce Secretary Kelly Schulz updated the Commission on two recent staff appointments. Signe Pringle, has been named Assistant Secretary for Business Development and Tom Riford has been named Assistant Secretary, Marketing and Communications, Tourism, Film and the Arts. She briefed the Commission on the five (5) County Tours completed, commenting on the feedback received. Secretary Schulz also reported on the Luke Paper Mill Closure in Western Maryland and the collective engagement of several State Agencies to address the workforce issues and attraction of a potential purchaser. She also reported on the successful BIO 2019 Conference recently held in Philadelphia and the SelectUSA Conference in Washington, DC. Secretary Schulz concluded by stating she is reviewing internal functions for efficiencies to make it easier to expand and attract businesses.

VI. Department of Commerce Updates

- a. International Investment and Trade

Jessica Reynolds, Acting Director, Office of International Trade and Investment, provided an update on strategic initiatives which included the expansion of the Memorandum of Understanding with the United Kingdom Midlands. She described upcoming initiatives, gave an update on export promotion and foreign direct investment and recent trade show participation. (Presentation on file.)

b. Tourism, Film and the Arts

Tom Riford, Assistant Secretary, Marketing & Communications, Tourism, Film and the Arts presented an update on recent regional meetings and product launches, 2017 tourism customer spending, visitor counts, the Office's four (4) strategic measurable objectives – Market Expansion, Leveraging Partnerships, Maximizing Opportunities, and Transactionable Outcomes. Mr. Riford noted that tourism jobs had surpassed manufacturing in Washington County – the first time since 2013. He concluded by showing the new “Open for It” tourism advertisement television spots and announced the Governor's Business Summit scheduled for September 20, 2019. (Presentation on file.)

Mr. Riford answered questions from the Commission related to tourism and the film industry. Commissioner Dickerson discussed the impact of the J1 Visa program, increase of minimum wage and the influx of non-family run hotels in Ocean City as it relates to the tourism industry.

c. Business & Industry Sector Development

Jayson Knott, Senior Director, Business Development, provided an overview of recent wins which included Kite Pharma, Alderson Loop and Cefalu/Capital Seaboard. He highlighted pending announced wins which would add an additional 2,700 jobs, and select new opportunities. (Presentation on file.)

Mr. Knott answered question from the Commission on breakdown of activity – 65-70% in state projects overall with 35% out of state attraction. The Commissioners questioned the amount of activity occurring in Urbana and the reasoning.

d. Legislative Update

Rhonda Ray, Director, Policy, Research, and Government Affairs provided an update on the 2019 Legislative Session, referencing the Department's Legislative Report handout. Ms. Ray discussed Opportunity Zone Incentives, Regulations Impacting Small Businesses, and the Sunset Extensions of the Job Creation and Maryland Research and Development Tax Credits. She emphasized the need to improve the storytelling of the impact of the Department Programs on businesses which the Department will be focused on prior to the next Legislative Session. (Presentation and handout on file.)

VII. MEDC Subcommittees Discussion

a. Scorecard

Subcommittee Chair Ed Coleman reviewed the updated Scorecard noting job growth continues to lag, wage growth is improving but still not at the same rate as the United States, Gross Domestic Product, loss of population in Baltimore City, and new ranking of #6 Best States by US News. He added that the Migration Study and Recommendations completed by the Subcommittee in 2018 may be discussed with the Strategic Plan Subcommittee, particularly as it relates to retaining and attracting 18-25 year olds and pre-retirees and retirees. (Scorecard on file.)

b. Strategic Plan

Subcommittee Co-chairs, Aris Melissaratos and Laura Neuman presented the progress to date as found in the Subcommittee handout. Mr. Melissaratos noted that while all the goals of the 2016 Strategic Plan are important, more emphasis and innovative approaches will be given to advancing innovation and entrepreneurship, highlighting the need to include Higher Education, the Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO), the University of Maryland System, Federal Labs and Agencies and engaging the Venture Capital community. He stated the economic strategies will be approached on a regional basis, identifying regional needs and strengths, the importance of inclusiveness and diversity, technology transfer and the importance of prosperity with purpose. (Subcommittee Report on file.)

Discussion occurred among the Commissioners. Secretary Schulz noted that in spite of the State's taxes and policies, businesses still seek and remain in Maryland. She added measures are needed to make the State more business friendly. It was suggested that TEDCO report on its start-up investments at each Commission meeting.

VIII. Good of the Order

No addition information was shared among the Commissioners.

IX. 2019 Meetings: September 17th, December 10th

X. Adjournment

There being no further business and upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00pm.